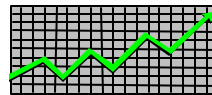


SURVEY OF VETERANS' SATISFACTION WITH THE VA EDUCATION BENEFITS CLAIMS PROCESS:

1999 Summary Report National and Regional Processing Office (RPO) Trends

Bringing the
"Voice of the Customer"
into Decision-making



***Surveys and Research Staff
Data Management Office
Veterans Benefits Administration
May 2000***

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Executive Summary: National Highlights

- Nationally, 78.8 percent of all surveyed education beneficiaries were very or somewhat satisfied with the way their claims were handled. This is not a significant increase over the 78.1 percent of respondents who were very or somewhat satisfied with the way their claims were handled in the 1998 survey.
- The following items were identified as areas of importance to satisfaction with claim handling on which VA is performing extremely well (more than 80 percent of the beneficiaries responded positively):
 - VA 1-800-827-1000 contact was very or somewhat responsive.**
 - VA 1-800-827-1000 contact was very or somewhat courteous.**
 - VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact was very or somewhat responsive.**
 - VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact was very or somewhat courteous.**
 - VA RPO direct contact was very or somewhat responsive.**
 - VA RPO direct contact was very or somewhat courteous.**
 - Respondent's knowledge of VA benefits they might be entitled to were excellent, very good, or good.**
- The following items were identified as areas of importance to satisfaction on which VA could be performing better (less than 80 percent of the beneficiaries responded positively):
 - Got all or most of needed information from VA 1-800-827-1000 contact.**
 - Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1.**
 - Got all or most of needed information from VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact.**
 - Able to get needed information on first call to VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1.**
 - Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA RPO local phone number.**
 - Got all or most of needed information from VA RPO.**
 - Able to get needed information on first call to VA RPO.**
 - VA kept respondent completely or mostly informed of the status of application.**

Executive Summary: Significant National Trends

- VA's **performance increased** significantly on the following customer service items between the 1998 Survey and the 1999 Survey:

Question	1998	1999
Got all or most of needed info from VA School Representative	70.9	73.9
VA School Representative was very or somewhat courteous	90.7	93.2
Completely or mostly understand how benefits are paid	60.3	62.8
Did not have difficulty with monthly certification process	70.4	75.7
Did not have difficulty with monthly payment process	67.5	73.4
Inaccurate payment resolved in a timely manner	49.9	57.2
Good understanding of remaining benefits	75.5	78.7

- The first two items show that respondents feel the service provided by the VA School Representatives has improved from 1998 to 1999, as a higher percentage reported that the Representatives were courteous, and that they received all or most of the information they needed from them.
- It also seems that respondents' understanding of the benefits process is improving, as fewer reported having difficulties with the certification and payment processes and more reported having a good understanding of how benefits are paid and of their remaining benefits. Another possible reason for the fewer reported difficulties with the certification process is the increased use of electronic certification.
- Although a significantly higher percentage of respondents reported receiving an inaccurate payment in 1999 (see next page), of those respondents, a greater number in 1999 said that the inaccuracy was resolved in a timely manner .

Executive Summary: Significant National Trends

- VA's **performance decreased** significantly on these customer service items between the 1998 Survey and the 1999 Survey:

Question	1998	1999
Got all or most of needed information from pamphlet	68.1	64.8
Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA 1-800-827-1000	65.7	51.4
Got all or most of needed information from VA 1-800-827-1000	77.2	71.4
Able to get needed information on first call to VA 1-800-827-1000	74.2	66.4
1-800-827-1000 contact very or somewhat responsive	91.9	88.7
Able to get information regarding claim from VA 1-800-827-1000	89.4	80.0
Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA 1-888 GI-BILL-1	74.3	52.8
Got all or most of needed information from VA 1-888 GI-BILL-1	80.2	72.4
Able to get needed information on first call to VA 1-888 GI-BILL-1	72.1	65.8
Able to get information regarding claim from VA 1-888 GI-BILL-1	90.4	83.6
Very or somewhat easy to get through to RPO directly	71.3	56.4
Able to get information regarding claim from RPO directly	83.9	79.3
Did not have difficulty with application form	72.3	67.8
Were notified by VA that application was received	82.7	78.9
Kept completely or mostly informed of status of application	59.0	54.2
Never received inaccurate payment	76.2	65.0

- The most notable change from the 1998 to 1999 occurred in the performance of the VA 1-800-827-1000 and the 1-888-GI-BILL-1 telephone numbers. For almost every question referring to these numbers, respondents rated the performance of the telephone contact lower in 1999 than in 1998.

Executive Summary: Significant RPO Trends

The performance of the following RPOs **increased** significantly on these customer service items between the 1998 Survey and the 1999 Survey.

RPO	Question	1998	1999
Atlanta			
	Respondents did not have difficulty with monthly certification process	65.7	79.9
	Respondents did not have difficulty with monthly payment process	59.3	75.6
	Never had to borrow or pay out-of-pocket expenses for enrollment	40.6	49.4
	Never had to delay enrollment because VA did not complete paperwork on time	87.0	90.4
	Respondent has good understanding of education benefits used and remaining	75.8	80.2
	Respondent very or somewhat satisfied with claim handling	73.3	78.6
Buffalo			
	Able to get needed information on first call to RPO	60.2	74.8
	Got all or most of needed information from 1-800-827-1000 contact	68.2	75.8
	Respondents did not have difficulty with monthly payment process	66.8	74.4
	Inaccurate payment was resolved in a timely manner	41.2	62.8
	Respondent has good understanding of education benefits used and remaining	73.5	79.6
	Respondent's knowledge of VA benefits excellent, very good, or good	79.5	83.9
St. Louis			
	Respondents did not have difficulty with monthly certification process	72.2	78.6
	VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact was very or somewhat courteous	84.5	95.7

Executive Summary: Significant RPO Trends

The performance of the following RPOs **decreased** significantly on these customer service items between the 1998 Survey and the 1999 Survey:

RPO	Question	1998	1999
Atlanta			
	VA notified respondent of receipt of application	81.9	76.9
	Got all or most of needed information from 1-800-827-1000 contact	78.5	66.7
	Able to get needed information on first call to 1-800-827-1000	72.4	58.1
	VA 1-800-827-1000 contact very or somewhat responsive	93.3	87.6
	VA 1-800-827-1000 contact able to give information regarding claim	88.9	78.7
	Got all or most of needed information from 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact	85.8	69.1
	Able to get needed information on first call to 1-888-GI-BILL-1	75.4	60.7
	VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact able to give information regarding claim	93.6	87.4
	Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA RPO directly	68.6	52.1
Buffalo			
	Respondents kept completely or mostly informed of application status	61.5	52.8
	Respondent never received an inaccurate payment	77.4	70.3
Muskogee			
	Able to get needed information on first call to RPO	78.5	64.6
	Able to get information about claim from RPO (of those who needed claim information)	88.0	80.0
	VA notified respondent of receipt of application	83.9	78.8
	Respondents kept completely or mostly informed of application status	62.9	56.6
	Respondent never received an inaccurate payment	78.8	59.6
	Never had to delay enrollment because VA did not complete paperwork on time	92.4	89.5
	Got all or most of needed information from 1-800-827-1000 contact	80.1	72.3
	Able to get needed information on first call to 1-800-827-1000	74.5	67.2
	VA 1-800-827-1000 contact able to give information regarding claim	92.0	77.8
	VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact able to give information regarding claim	90.1	79.6
	Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA RPO directly	75.3	53.6
St. Louis			
	Respondents did not have difficulty with application	74.7	63.1
	Respondent never received an inaccurate payment	77.5	65.7
	Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA RPO directly	73.2	56.9
	Got all or most of needed information from 1-800-827-1000 contact	79.4	71.6
	VA 1-800-827-1000 contact very or somewhat responsive	92.5	87.6
	VA 1-800-827-1000 contact able to give information regarding claim	90.3	84.0

Introduction and Methodology

This report represents the third nationwide summary of beneficiary satisfaction with the VA education benefits claims process. The first report was issued in January of 1999 and presented the results of the Muskogee Pre-test and the Rollout Survey which were conducted between the fall 1997 and the summer of 1998. The second report was issued in May of 1999 and presented the results of the first simultaneous survey of all of the Regional Processing Offices.

The three educational benefits programs administered by the VBA that were chosen to be studied with this survey are the following:

- Chapter 30, Montgomery GI Bill – Active Duty Educational Assistance Program, available to veterans and individuals currently on active-duty
- Chapter 1606, Montgomery GI Bill – Selected Reserves Educational Assistance Program, available to members of the active reserve and National Guard
- Chapter 35, Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program, available to certain dependents of veterans.

The data in this report were collected for the four Regional Processing Offices (RPOs) from December of 1999 to mid-March of 2000, using mailed questionnaires which also gave respondents the option of completing the survey on the Internet. Roughly 16 percent of the respondents completed the survey on the Internet. The sample consisted of 1400 claims from each RPO, 700 original and 700 supplemental claims. It was also drawn to be proportionally representative of the three programs. The data have been weighted to reflect the true proportion of beneficiaries with original or supplemental claims, in order to avoid over-representation of original claimants.

The content of the questionnaire was based on information gathered from focus groups with education beneficiaries and previous customer satisfaction surveys identified by the Surveys and Research Staff. After the questionnaire was developed, cognitive interviews were conducted with 15 veterans to test both the questionnaire and cover letter for clarity and relevance. For a more detailed explanation of the questionnaire development, see the "Survey of Veterans' Satisfaction with the VA Educational Benefits Claims Process, Pilot Test", prepared by Schulman, Ronca, and Bucuvalas, Inc., published February 1998. Several revisions to the questionnaire took place between the Rollout phase and the second administration of the Survey in the fall of 1998. For example, a section of questions was added to assess customer satisfaction with the new 1-888-GI-BILL-1 phone number. A question was also added to the section concerning contact with the Regional Processing Office that asked how easy it was to get through to the RPO by telephone. There were also additions made to the questionnaire between the 1998 and 1999 survey administrations; namely, a question was added for each method of phone contact which asks if the respondent typically had any experiences such as getting a busy signal or being disconnected when calling VA. A section requesting basic demographic information was also added.

The response rate for the 1999 survey was 52 percent. This survey will be administered on an annual basis.

Summary Statistics

Characteristic	Percent in Sample-1998	Percent in Sample-1999	Percent satisfied with handling of claim-1998	Percent satisfied with handling of claim-1999
Total	100.0	100.0	78.1	78.8
Gender				
Men	73.7	73.3	77.7	78.4
Women	26.3	26.7	79.6	80.2
Age				
19 years and under	5.5	4.9	86.0	79.9
20 to 24 years	28.7	32.0	76.7	76.0
25 to 29 years	29.0	28.2	77.6	78.3
30 to 34 years	10.7	10.7	74.9	79.2
35 to 39 years	5.1	4.4	73.0	90.1
40 years or older	20.9	19.8	81.6	81.3
Degree Objective				
Associate	52.2	53.9	78.3	78.4
Bachelors	38.9	39.7	76.3	79.4
Masters	7.6	5.8	89.0	81.9
PhD	1.2	.6	79.4	87.5
Post-doctorate	*	*	*	*
Type of Claim				
Original	12.4	12.6	81.5	81.2
Supplemental	87.6	87.4	77.6	78.5
RPO				
Atlanta	22.1	26.1	73.3	78.6
Buffalo	21.3	21.6	78.5	78.5
Muskogee	34.5	30.8	79.4	77.2
St. Louis	22.1	21.5	80.5	81.9
Chapter				
Chapter 30 (Veterans)	64.9	66.1	78.2	79.3
Chapter 30 (Active duty)	6.6	5.2	68.4	70.6
Chapter 35 (Dependents)	11.3	12.0	85.3	83.9
Chapter 1606 (Reservists)	17.2	16.7	77.0	75.9

NOTE: Significant differences in satisfaction between 1998 and 1999 are bolded and italicized.

* Category of Post-doctorate had less than twenty respondents.

Discussion of Summary Statistics

- The chart on the previous page shows the demographic distribution of the survey respondents for both the 1998 and 1999 administrations, as well as the percentage of those who were very or somewhat satisfied with the handling of their claim for both the 1998 and 1999 administrations. Significant differences in the satisfaction levels between 1998 and 1999 are **bolded and italicized**.
- Women respondents are still slightly more satisfied (80.2 percent) with the handling of their claims than men (78.4 percent).
- Those respondents in the age group “35 to 39 years” reported a dramatically higher satisfaction level (90.1 percent) for 1999 than for 1998 (73.0 percent).
- Respondents with original claims tend to be slightly more satisfied (81.2 percent) than respondents with supplemental claims (78.5 percent).
- The Atlanta Regional Processing Office, which had the lowest satisfaction rate of the four RPOs in 1998, experienced a significant increase in the overall satisfaction rate of the respondents from 1998 (73.3 percent) to 1999 (78.6 percent).

Quadrant Analysis

Quadrant analysis is a useful tool in determining which individual performance areas need improvement in order to raise the overall quality of service. The analysis involves determining the importance of individual performance areas (how meaningful an area is to the veteran) and VA's performance in each area. Generally, items with high importance but relatively low performance are those which deserve immediate attention.

Each of the thirty-one variables represented in the Quadrant Analysis graph are plotted on the basis of:

- 1) **Importance:** a variable's correlation with the overall satisfaction with the handling of a claim, and
- 2) **Performance:** a variable's topbox percent (the percent of people who answered positively to the question).

Importance is measured by variable correlations with *overall satisfaction with the handling of a claim*. These correlations determine the degree to which variables are related to overall satisfaction. Zero indicates no correlation, and 1 indicates perfect correlation. The closer a variable's correlation (Importance) is to 1, the stronger that variable's relationship is with the overall satisfaction with the handling of a claim. *Variables that have stronger correlations are considered to have higher importance.*

Performance is measured by the percentage of respondents who responded positively to a performance item. Topbox percents represent how well VA is performing within a given area (for example, the percent who received all or most of the information they needed from their contact with the VA Education Regional Processing Office). *The higher the percent, the better VA is performing.*

The quadrant analysis is divided into four quadrants (sections) based on the following combinations of the plotted location of a variable:

Quadrant I: Critical Improvement Areas (high importance, low performance)

Quadrant II: Maintain Relationship Building Variables (high importance, high performance)

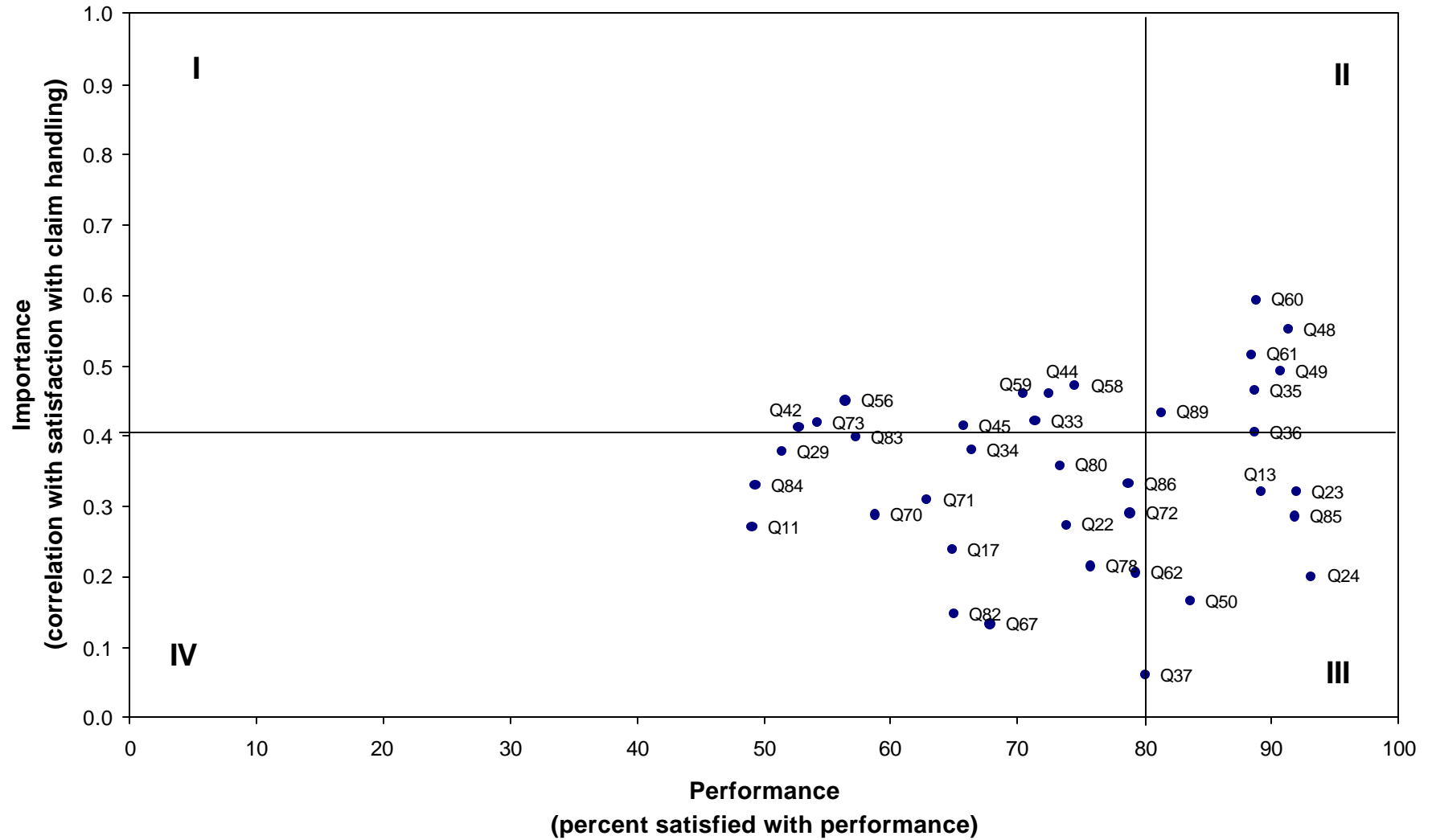
Quadrant III: Lower Return on High Performance (low importance, high performance)

Quadrant IV: Lower Return on Investment (low importance, low performance)

The horizontal line in the plot represents importance and is placed at .40, which indicates reasonably high correlation. The vertical line represents performance and is placed at 80.0 percent. The quadrant lines can be moved up or down, left or right, to include more or fewer items in each quadrant. The plotted numbers within each section of the graph correspond with the performance items listed below. These numbers also refer to the question numbers used in the questionnaire.

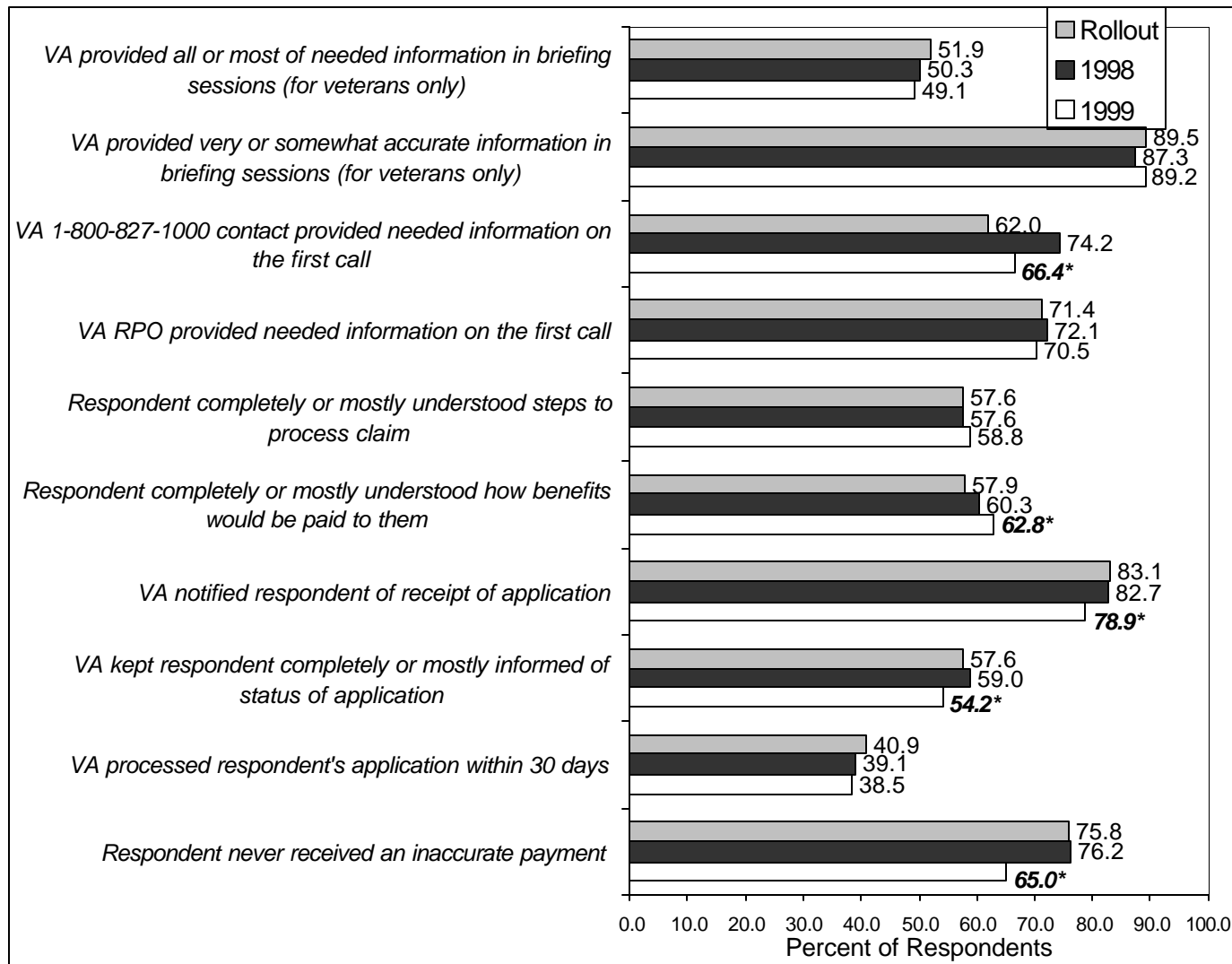
<p>Quadrant I contains eight (8) items on which VA is not performing as well as it could be, but which significantly impacts veterans' satisfaction with claim handling:</p> <p>Q33 Got all or most of needed information from VA 1-800-827-1000 contact</p> <p>Q42 Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1</p> <p>Q44 Got all or most of needed information from VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact</p> <p>Q45 Able to get needed information on first call to VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1</p> <p>Q56 Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA RPO local phone number</p> <p>Q58 Got all or most of needed information from VA RPO</p> <p>Q59 Able to get needed information on first call to VA RPO</p> <p>Q73 VA kept respondent completely or mostly informed of the status of application</p>	<p>Quadrant II contains seven (7) items on which VA is performing well and which are important to overall satisfaction. VA should maintain current practices and resources for these items so that performance does not decline and negatively affect satisfaction.</p> <p>Q35 VA 1-800-827-1000 contact was very or somewhat responsive</p> <p>Q36 VA 1-800-827-1000 contact was very or somewhat courteous</p> <p>Q48 VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact was very or somewhat responsive</p> <p>Q49 VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact was very or somewhat courteous</p> <p>Q60 VA RPO direct contact was very or somewhat responsive</p> <p>Q61 VA RPO direct contact was very or somewhat courteous</p> <p>Q89 Respondent's knowledge of entitled VA benefits were excellent, very good, or good</p>
<p>Quadrant IV contains sixteen (16) items on which VA is not performing as well as it could, but which are also not considered to have as great an impact on overall satisfaction as other items. There is a lower return on investment in these items, but, given resources, improvement could be sought:</p> <p>Q11 Got all or most of needed information from briefing sessions</p> <p>Q17 Got all or most of needed information from pamphlet</p> <p>Q22 Got all or most of needed information from VA school representative</p> <p>Q29 Very or somewhat easy to get through to VA 1-800-827-1000</p> <p>Q34 Able to get needed information on first call to VA 1-800-827-1000</p> <p>Q62 Able to get info about particular claim from VA RPO contact</p> <p>Q67 Nothing difficult or confusing about application form</p> <p>Q70 Completely or mostly understood steps necessary to process claim</p> <p>Q71 Completely or mostly understood how benefits would be paid to them</p> <p>Q72 VA notified respondent of receipt of application</p> <p>Q78 Nothing difficult with monthly certification process</p> <p>Q80 Nothing difficult with monthly payment process</p> <p>Q82 Never received an inaccurate payment</p> <p>Q83 Inaccurate payment resolved in a timely manner</p> <p>Q84 Never had to pay out-of-pocket expenses to enroll or stay enrolled in school</p> <p>Q86 Fully understands education benefits used and remaining</p>	<p>Quadrant III contains six (6) items on which VA is performing well but which, while important to overall satisfaction, do not have as great an impact as other items:</p> <p>Q13 Information received from briefing sessions was very or somewhat accurate (for veterans only)</p> <p>Q23 VA school representative was very or somewhat responsive</p> <p>Q24 VA school representative was very or somewhat courteous</p> <p>Q37 VA 1-800-827-1000 contact was able to give info about particular claim</p> <p>Q50 VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contact was able to give info about particular claim</p> <p>Q85 Never had to delay enrollment due to VA lateness in paper work</p>

Quadrant Analysis-1999



National Performance Trends

Chart 1: Selected Education Service Customer Service Standards



* Indicates significant difference between 1998 and 1999.

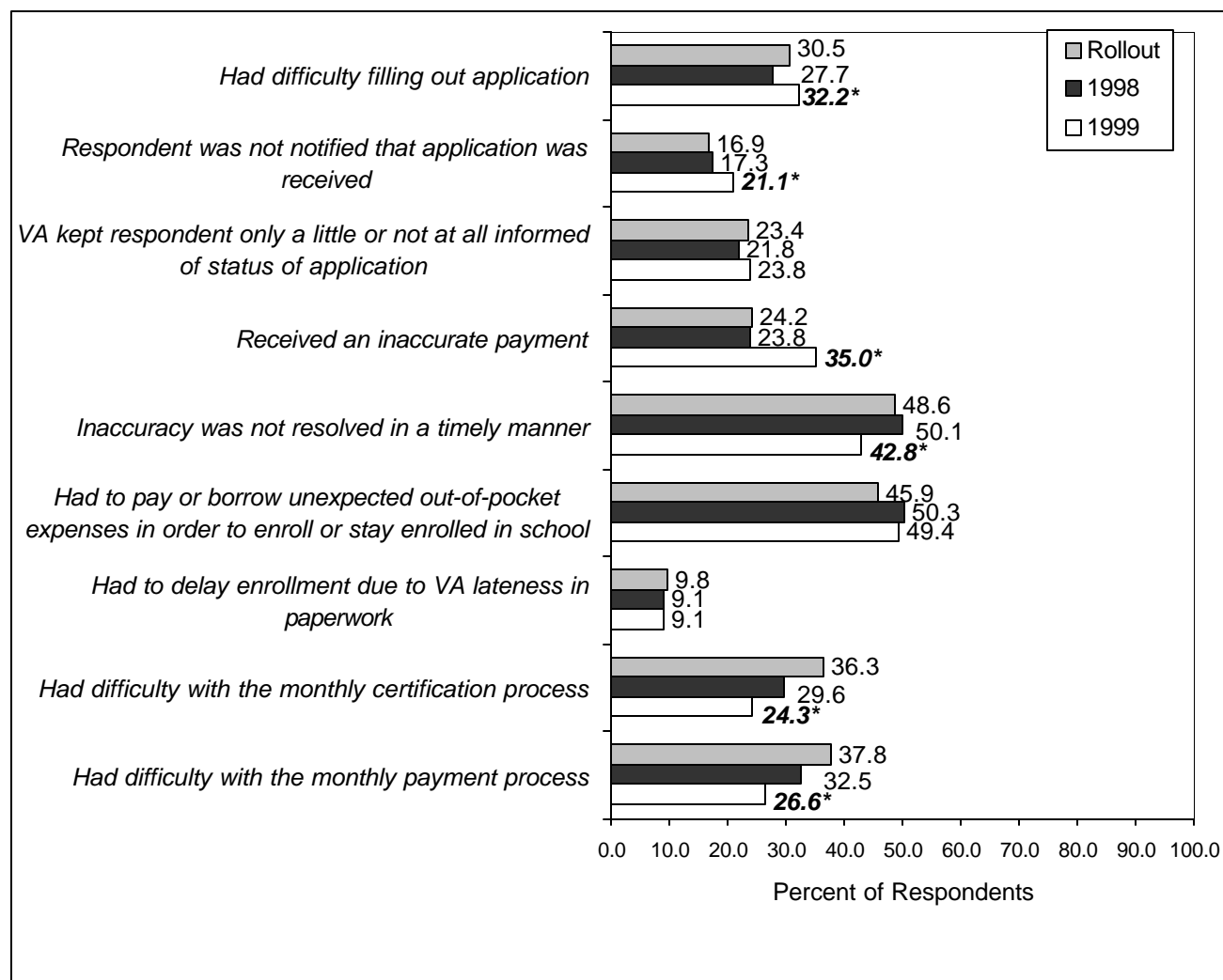
- These standards were developed by the VBA Education Service as the result of Executive Order 12862 which required government organizations to measure their current customer service.

- Respondents reporting that the VA 1-800-827-1000 contact was able to provide needed information on the first call **decreased** significantly from 74.2 percent in the 1998 to 66.4 percent in 1999.

- The percent of respondents who reported that they have never received an inaccurate payment **decreased** significantly from 76.2 percent in 1998 to 65.0 percent in 1999.

National Performance Trends

Chart 2: Respondent Frustration with the Application and Benefit Payment Processes

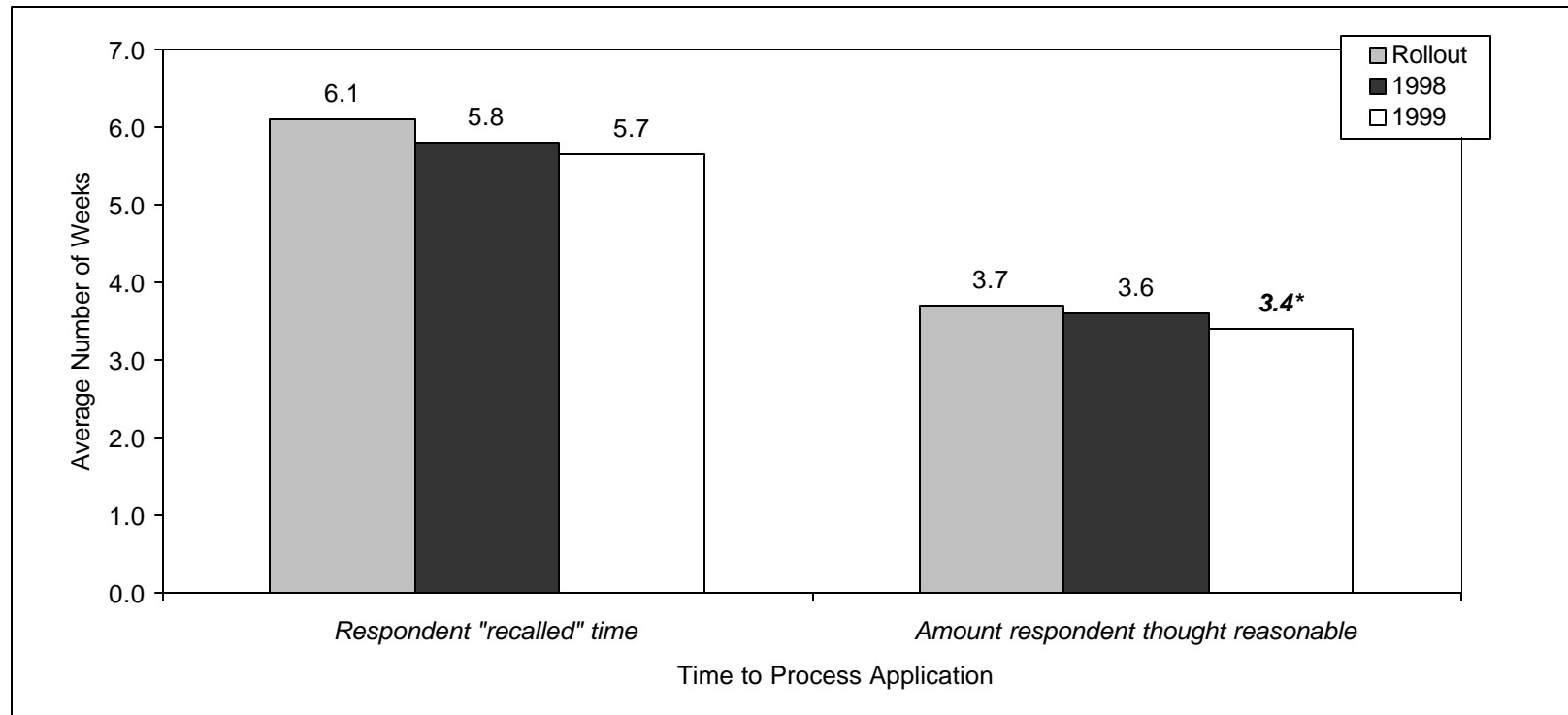


*Indicates significant difference between 1998 and 1999.

- Respondents having difficulty with the monthly certification process (29.6 percent to 24.3 percent), or the monthly payment process (32.5 percent to 26.6 percent) **declined** significantly for the second year in a row.
- The percentage of respondents who reported receiving an inaccurate payment **increased** significantly from 23.8 percent in 1998 to 35.0 percent in 1999. However, of those who did receive an inaccurate payment, the percent who said it was not resolved in a timely manner **decreased** significantly from 50.1 percent in 1998 to 42.8 percent in 1999.

National Performance Trends

Chart 3: Comparison of Recalled Time and Time Respondent Thought Reasonable to Process Application
(Average Number of Weeks)

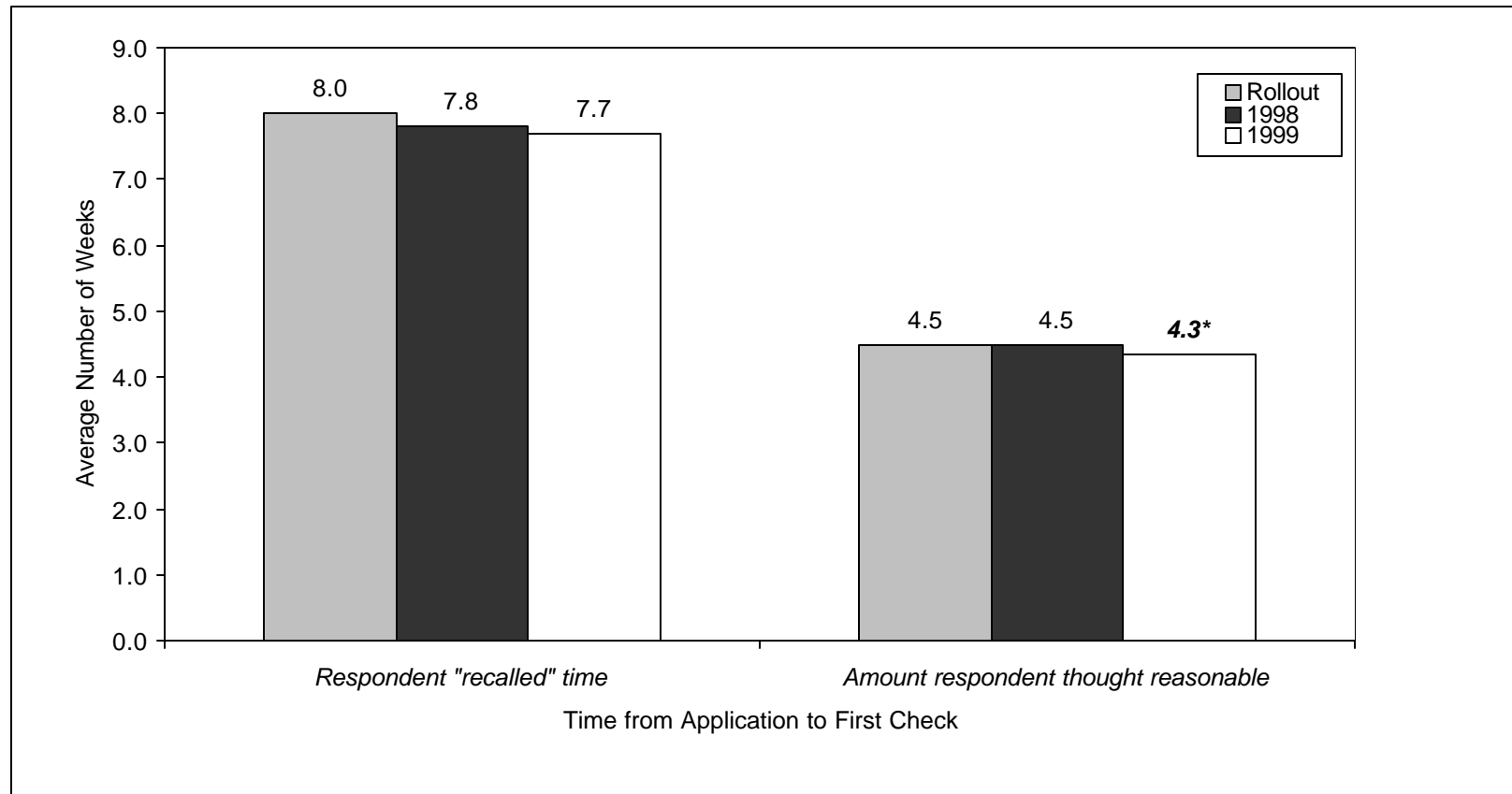


*Indicates significant difference between 1998 and 1999.

- The amount of time respondents thought was reasonable for processing the application **decreased** significantly from 3.6 weeks to 3.4 weeks, while the actual amount of time respondents recalled for processing the application remained stable from 1998 to 1999.

National Performance Trends

Chart 4: Comparison of Recalled Time and Time Respondent Thought Reasonable from Application Submission to First Check
(Average Number of Weeks)

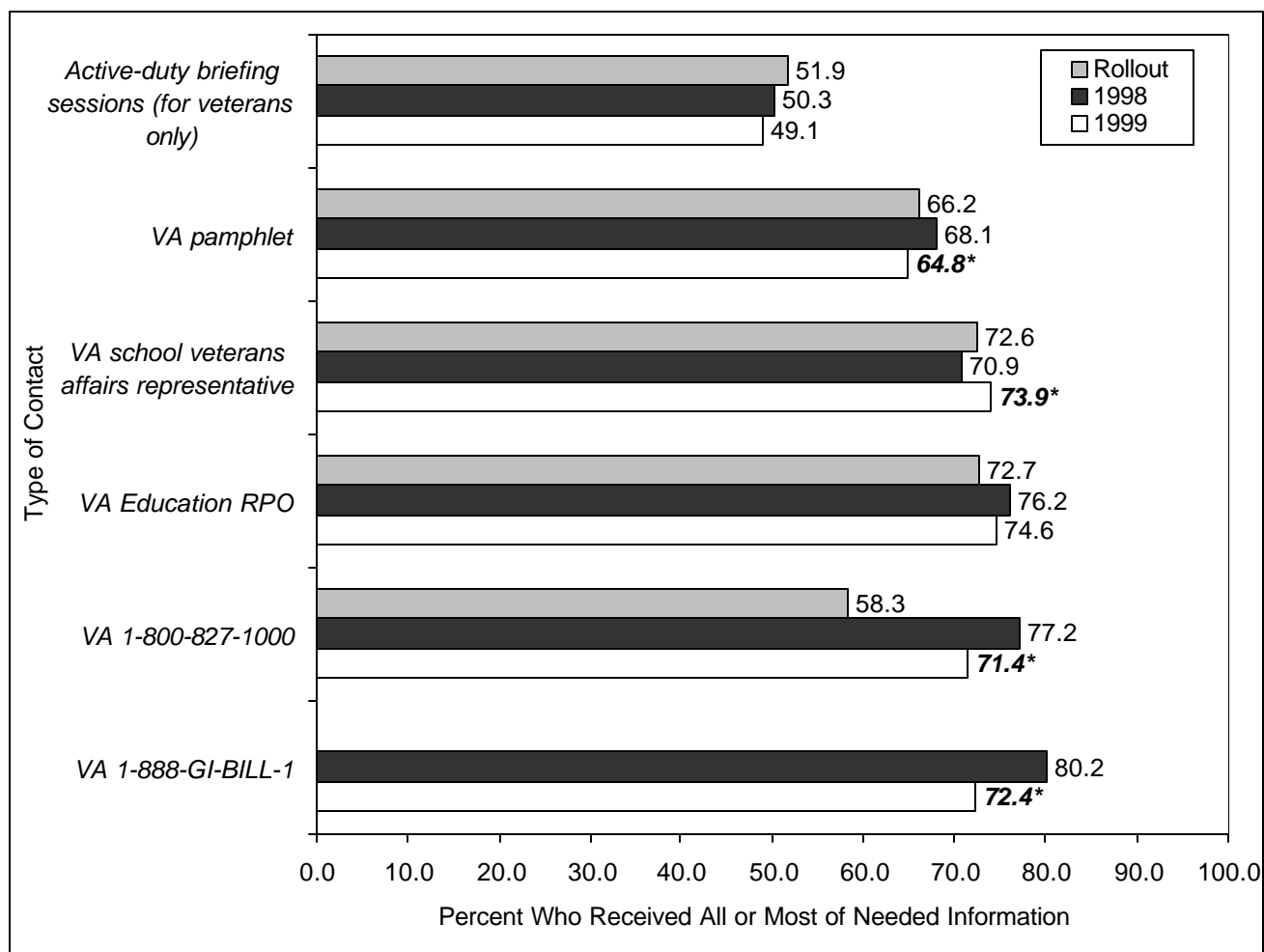


*Indicates significant difference from 1998 to 1999.

- The amount of time respondents thought was reasonable from the application being processed to receipt of their first check also *decreased* significantly from 4.5 weeks to 4.3 weeks, while the amount of time respondents actually recalled it taking to receive their first check remained stable.

National Performance Trends

Chart 5: Percent of Respondents Who Received All or Most of Needed Information by Type of Contact



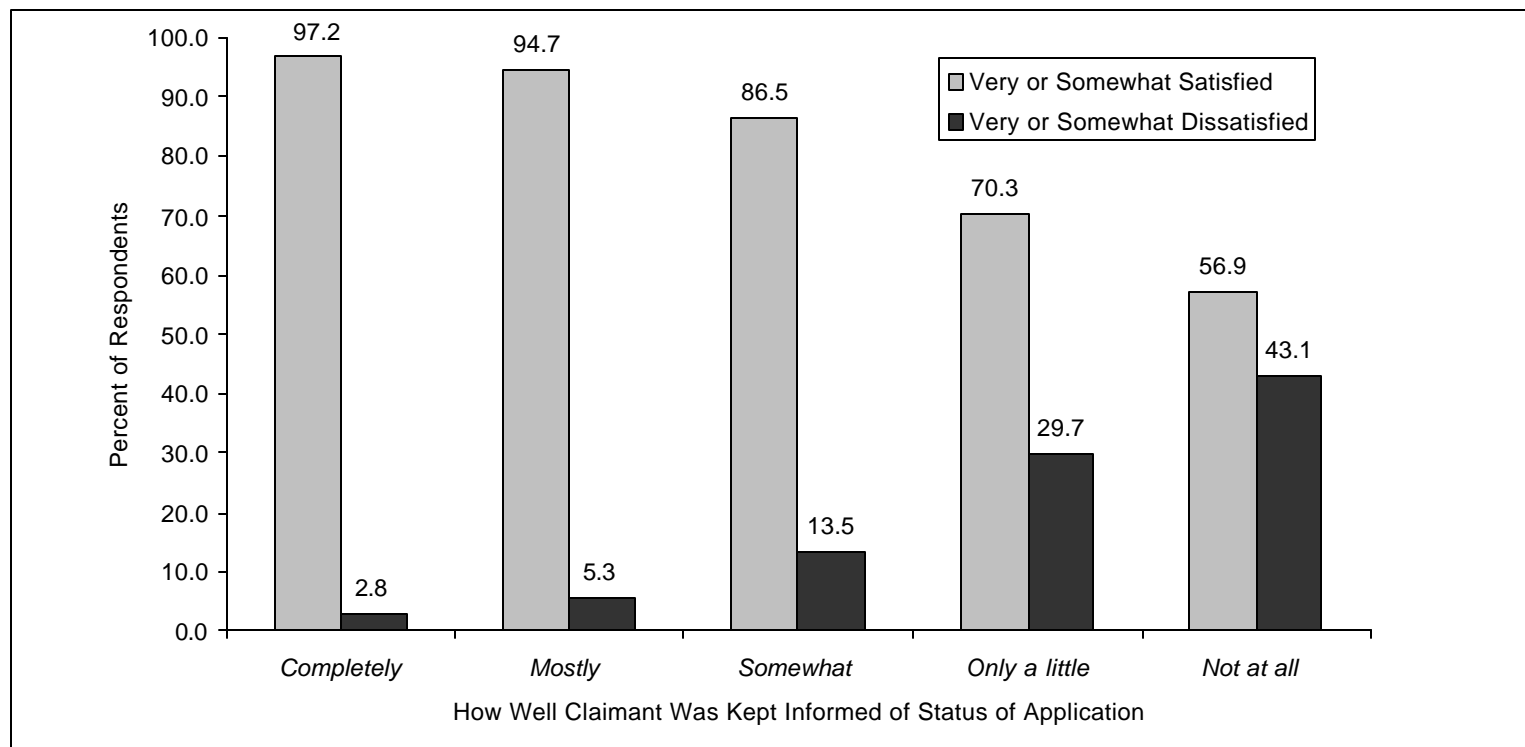
*Indicates significant difference from 1998 to 1999.

- The active-duty briefing sessions had the lowest percentage of respondents (49.1 percent) who said they received all or most of the information they needed.

- For both the 1-800-827-1000 and 1-888-GI-BILL-1 contacts, the percent of respondents who said they received all or most of needed information **decreased** significantly, from 77.2 percent to 71.4 percent for 1-800-827-1000, and from 80.2 percent to 72.4 percent for 1-888-GI-BILL-1.

Influences on Overall Satisfaction

Chart 6: Overall Satisfaction With Claim Handling by How Well Claimant Was Kept Informed of Status of Application

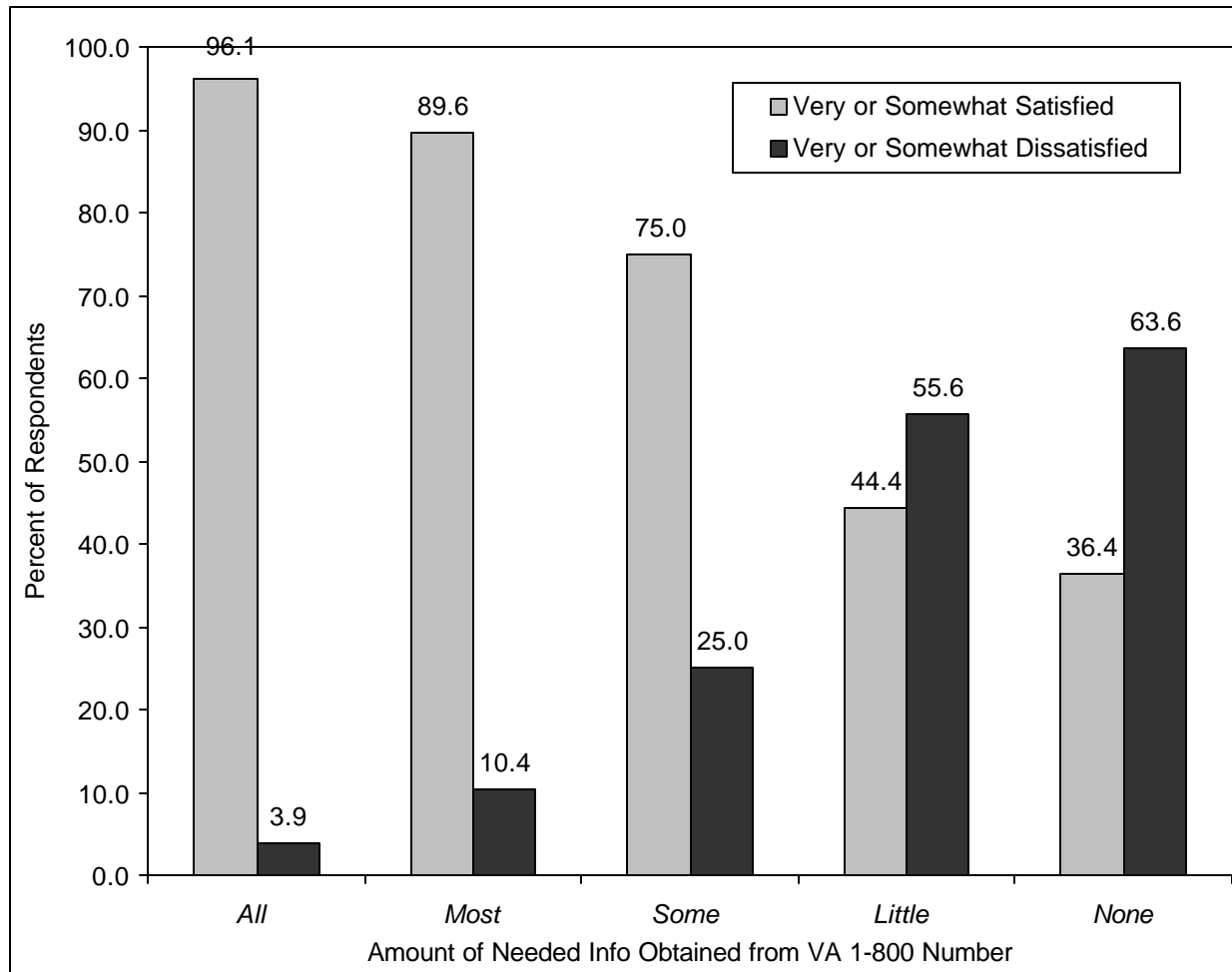


- 97.2 percent of the respondents who were kept completely informed of the status of their application were satisfied with the handling of their claim; but only 56.9 percent of those respondents who were not at all informed of the status of their application were satisfied with the handling of their claim.

NOTE: The category “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” was not included in this analysis.

Influences on Overall Satisfaction

Chart 7: Overall Satisfaction With Claim Handling by How Much Needed Information Was Obtained by Calling VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1



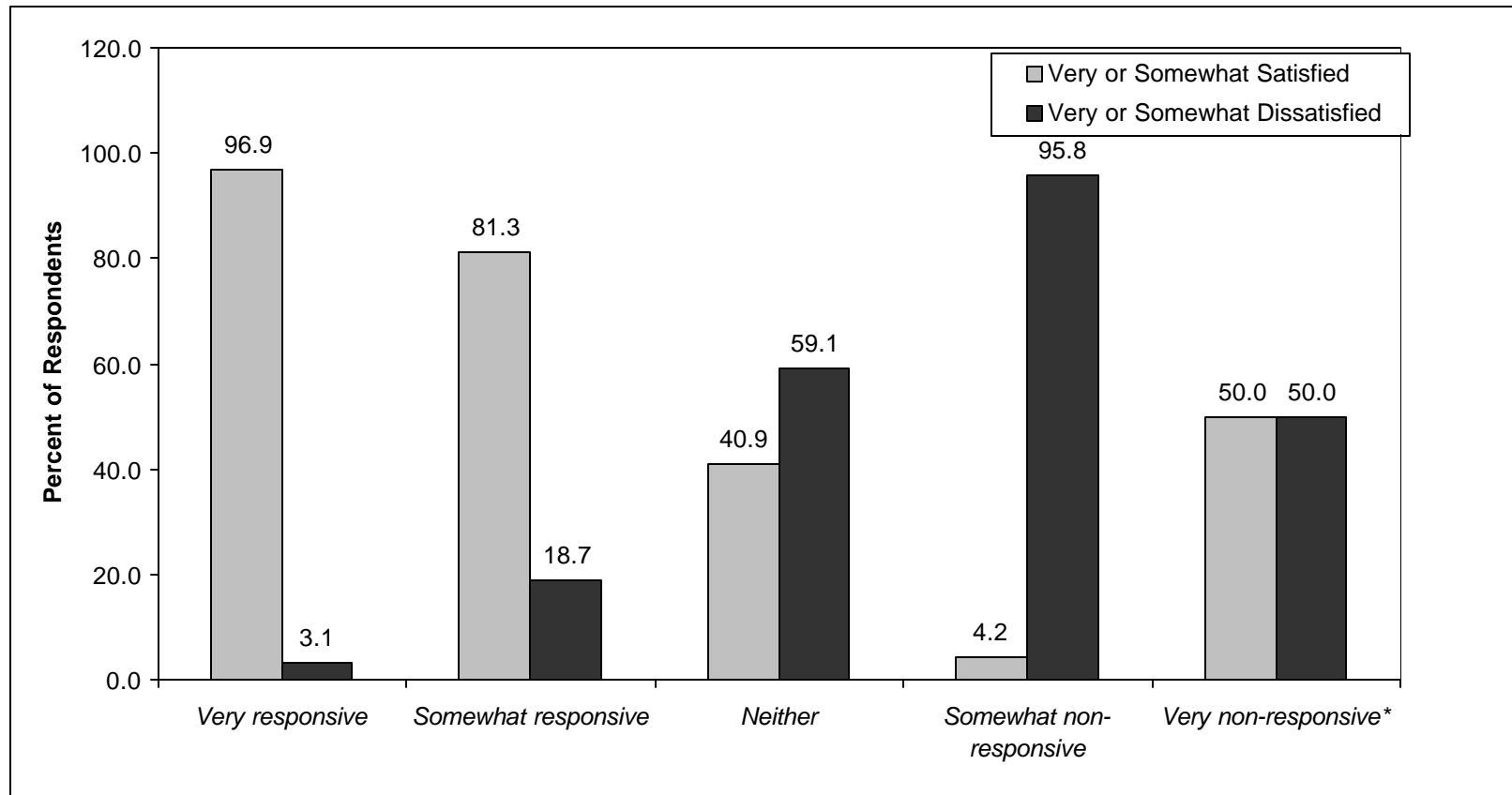
- There is a clear relationship between the amount of needed information received from VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 and overall satisfaction with the handling of claims. 96.1 percent of those respondents who received all of the needed information were satisfied with their claim handling, compared to only 36.4 percent of those respondents who received no needed information.

- There is a large decrease in the percentage of respondents reporting satisfaction from those who received some needed information from VA 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (75.0 percent) to those who received little needed information (44.4 percent).

- NOTE: The category “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied” was not included in this analysis.

Influences on Overall Satisfaction

Chart 8: Overall Satisfaction with Claim Handling by Responsiveness of VA RPO Contact



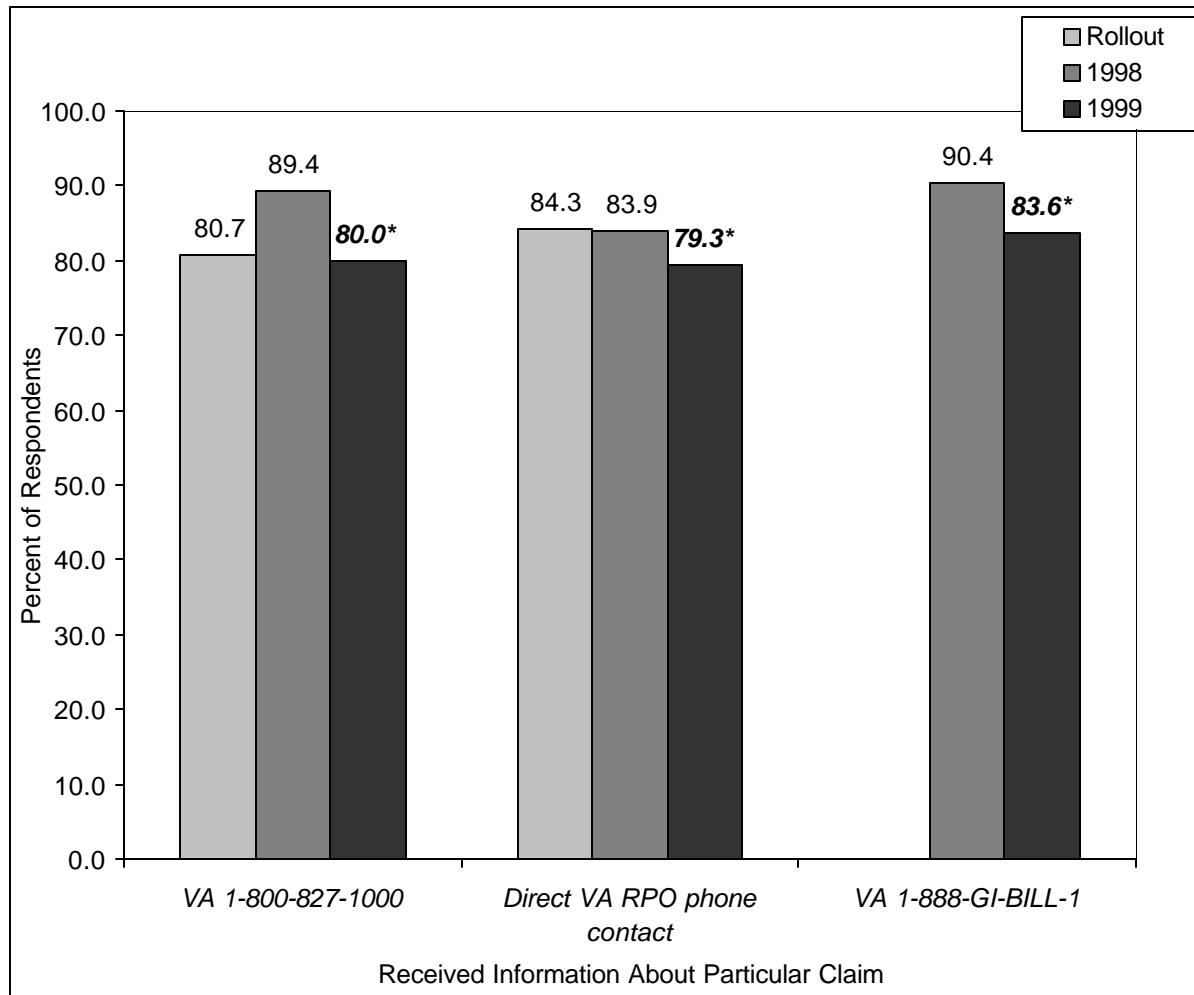
- The most highly correlated variable with overall satisfaction with claim handling for 1999 is the responsiveness of the RPO local number contact. 96.9 percent of respondents were satisfied when the RPO contact was very responsive, but only 4.2 percent were satisfied if they reported the contact as being somewhat non-responsive.

* The category of very non-responsive had only ten respondents.

NOTE: The category "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" was not included in this analysis.

Telephone Contact Comparisons

Chart 9: Respondents Who Received Information About Their Particular Claim By Method of Phone Contact

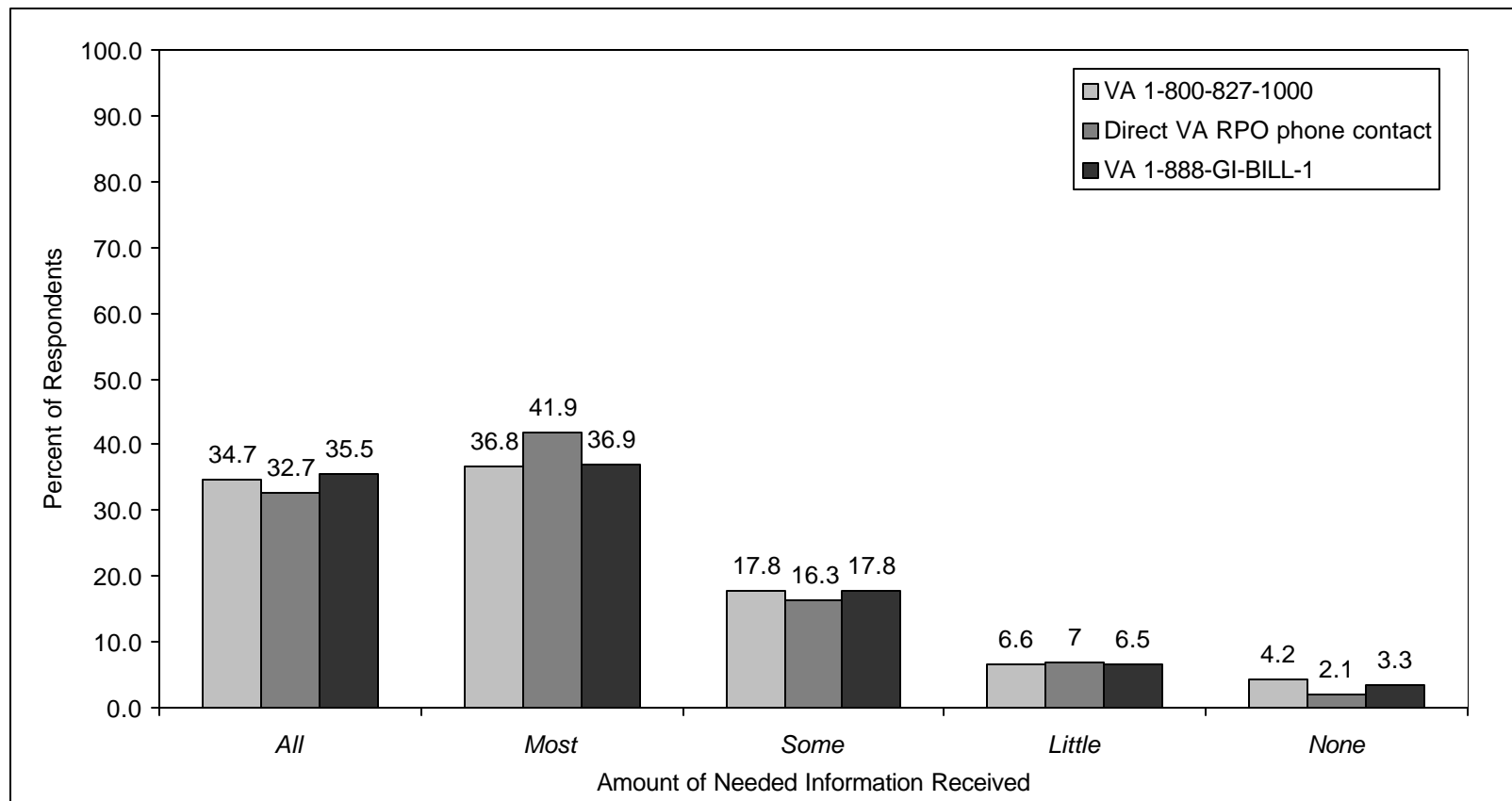


*Indicates significant difference from 1998 to 1999.

- This section of the report consists of comparisons of the three methods of telephone contact: calling 1-800-827-1000, calling 1-888-GI-BILL-1, or calling the RPO directly. Since the questionnaire did not include a section on the 1-888-GI-BILL-1 number during the Rollout, data for this type are only present for 1998 and 1999.
- There is a significant decrease in the percentage of respondents who received information about their particular claim from all three methods of phone contact from 1998 to 1999.
- The largest decrease in the percentage of respondents receiving information about their particular claim was for those calling 1-800-827-1000, from 89.4 percent in 1998 to 80.0 percent in 1999.

Telephone Contact Comparisons

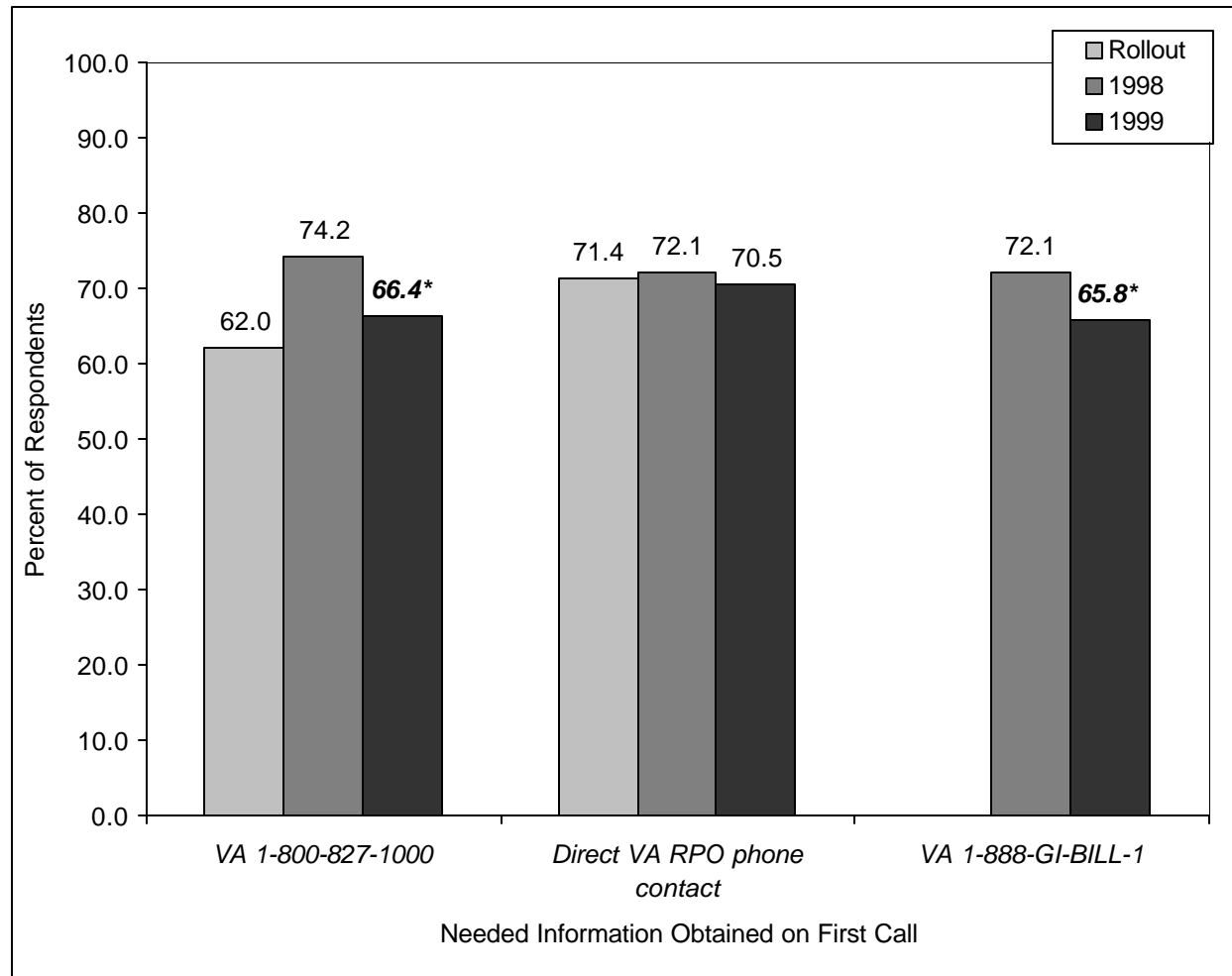
Chart 10: Amount of Needed Information Respondents Received By Method of Phone Contact



- There is very little difference in the percentages of respondents receiving all of the information they needed from each of the three sources, or in the percentages of those receiving some, little, or no needed information.

Telephone Contact Comparisons

Chart 11: Whether or Not Needed Information was Obtained on the First Call by Method of Phone Contact

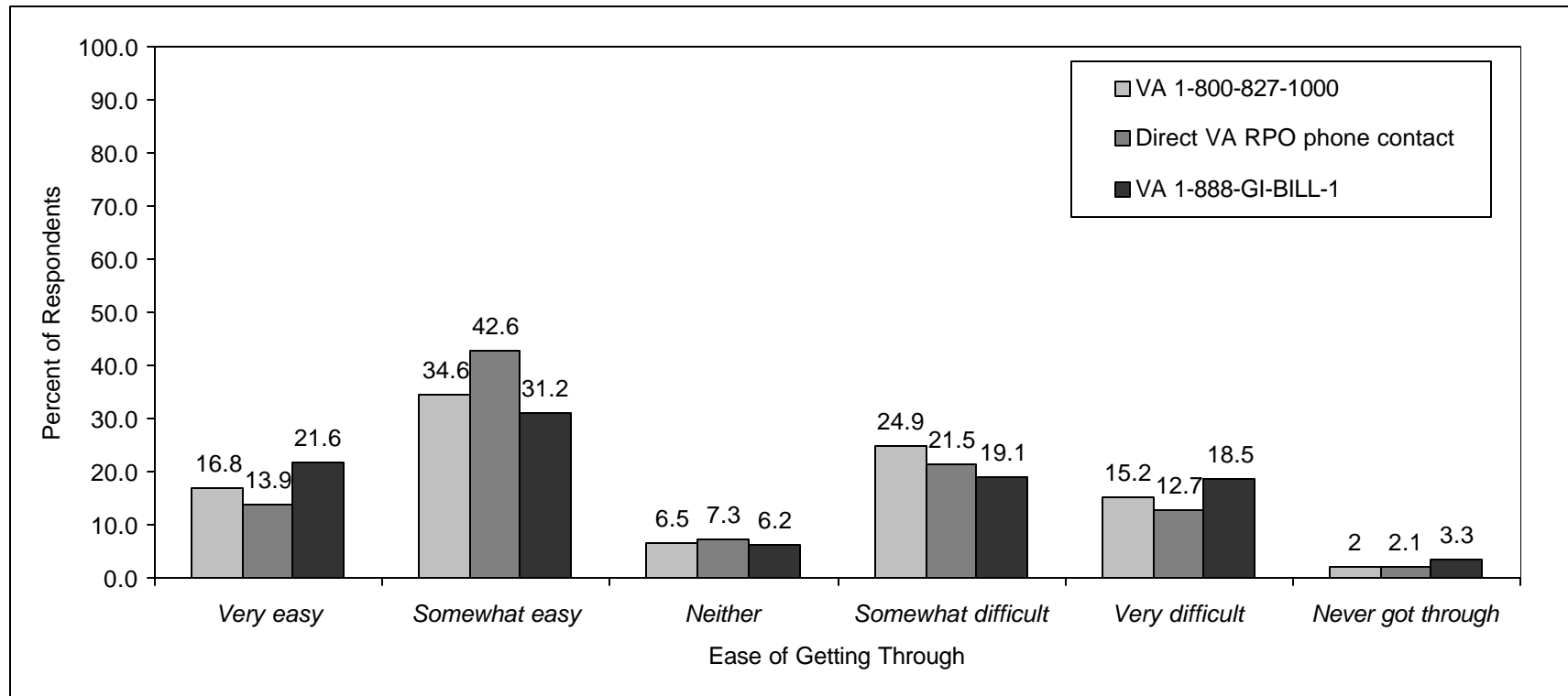


*Indicates significant difference from 1998 to 1999.

- There was a significant decrease in the percent of respondents who reported that they received the information they needed on the first call to both 1-800-827-1000 (74.2 percent in 1998 to 66.4 percent in 1999) and 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (72.1 percent in 1998 to 65.8 in 1999).
- The percent of respondents who received the needed information on the first call to the RPO directly has remained stable from the Rollout to 1999.

Telephone Contact Comparisons

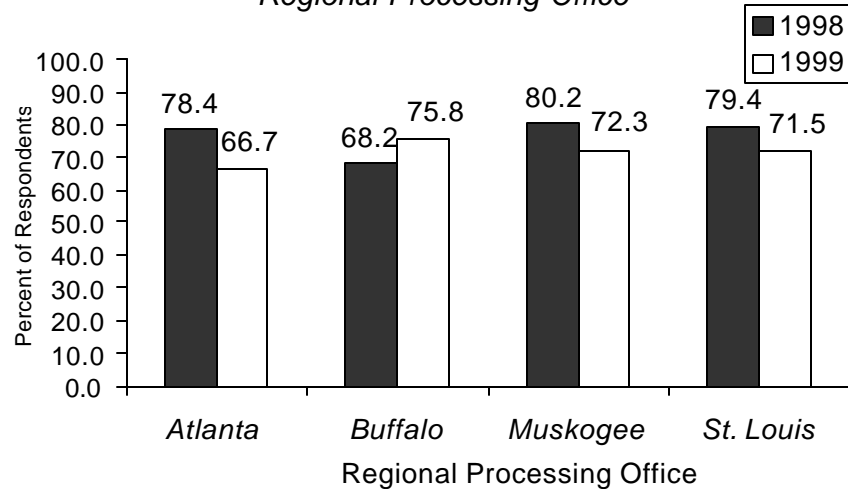
Chart 12: Ease of Getting Through to VA by Phone
by Method of Phone Contact



- Less than one-fourth of the respondents reported that it was very easy to get through to any of the sources, the lowest percentage being for the VA RPO at 13.9 percent.
- VA 1-800-827-1000 had the highest percentage of respondents (42.1 percent) who reported that it was somewhat difficult, very difficult, or that they never got through. 1-888-GI-BILL-1 followed closely at 40.5 percent and 36.3 percent of those who called the VA RPO directly reported difficulties in getting through.

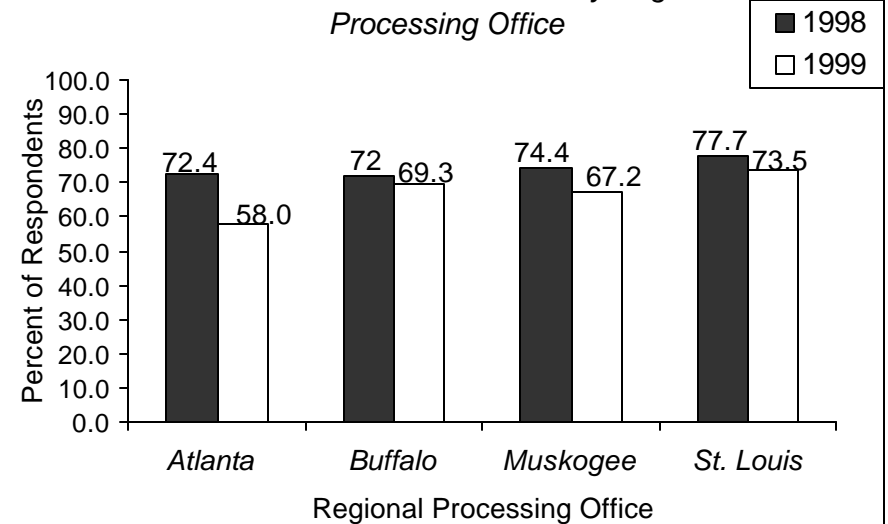
Significant Differences Between RPOs, 1999

Chart 13: Respondents Who Received All or Most of Needed Information from 1-800-827-1000 by Regional Processing Office



- The percentage of respondents served by the Buffalo RPO who received all or most of needed information from 1-800-827-1000 was significantly higher in 1999 (75.8 percent) than the percentage served by Atlanta (66.7 percent).

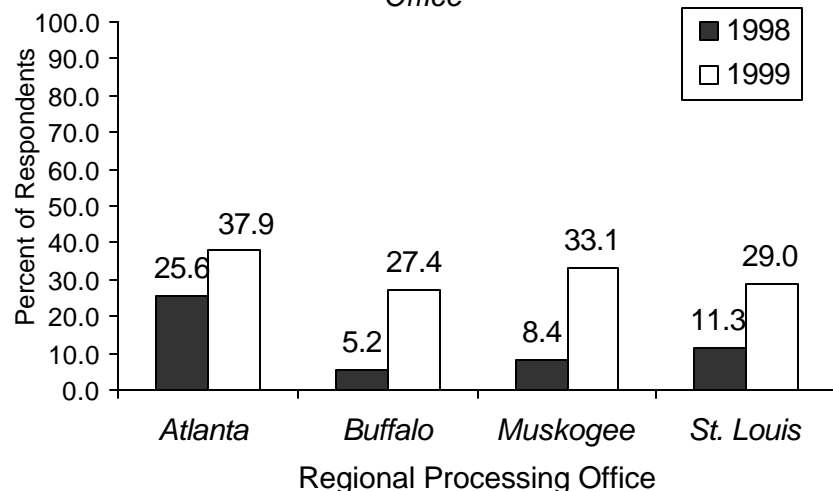
Chart 14: Respondents Received Needed Information on First Call to 1-800-827-1000 by Regional Processing Office



- The percentage of respondents served by the Atlanta RPO who received the information they needed on their first call to 1-800-827-1000 was significantly lower (58.0 percent) than the percentages of the other three RPOs.

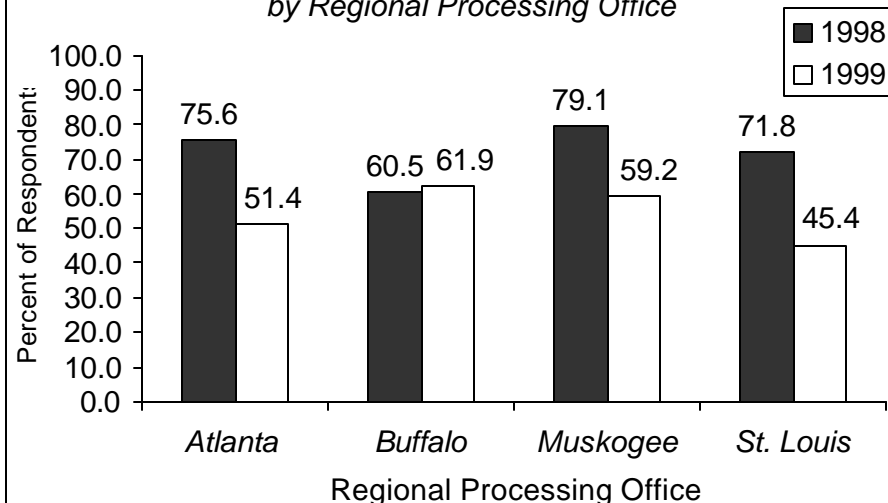
Significant Differences Between RPOs, 1999

Chart 15: Percent of Respondents Who Have Contacted 1-888-GI-BILL-1 by Regional Processing Office



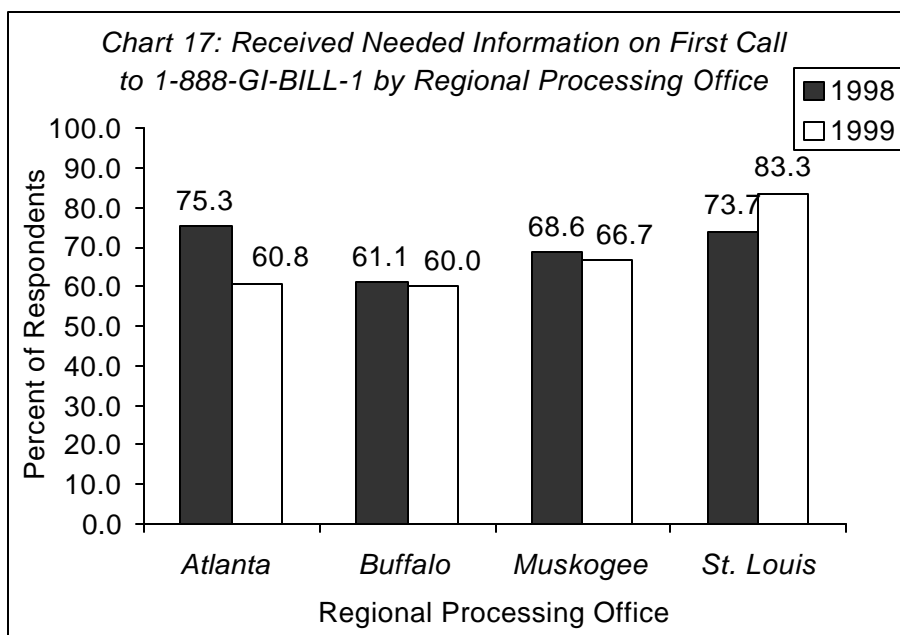
- The Atlanta RPO still has the highest percentage of respondents (37.9) who have contacted VA through 1-888-GI-BILL-1. They were significantly higher in 1999 than the percentages who reported calling into Buffalo and St. Louis.

Chart 16: Respondents Reporting that it was Very or Somewhat Easy to Get Through to 1-888-GI-BILL-1 by Regional Processing Office

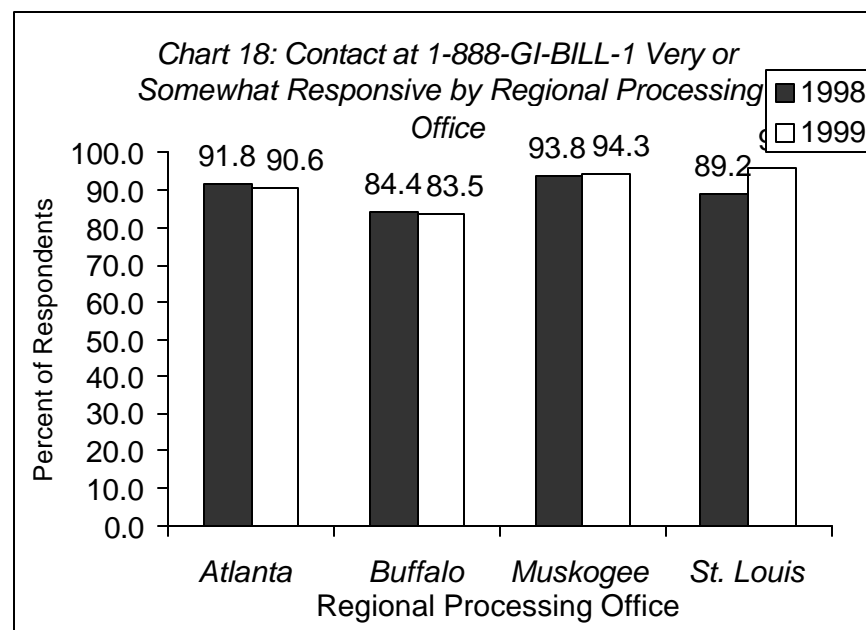


- The respondents served by the Buffalo and Muskogee RPOs had the easiest time getting through to 1-888-GI-BILL-1 in 1999; the percentages for Buffalo (61.9 percent) and Muskogee (59.2) were significantly higher than the percentage for St. Louis (45.4 percent). Buffalo's percentage was also significantly higher than Atlanta's (51.4 percent).

Significant Differences Between RPOs, 1999

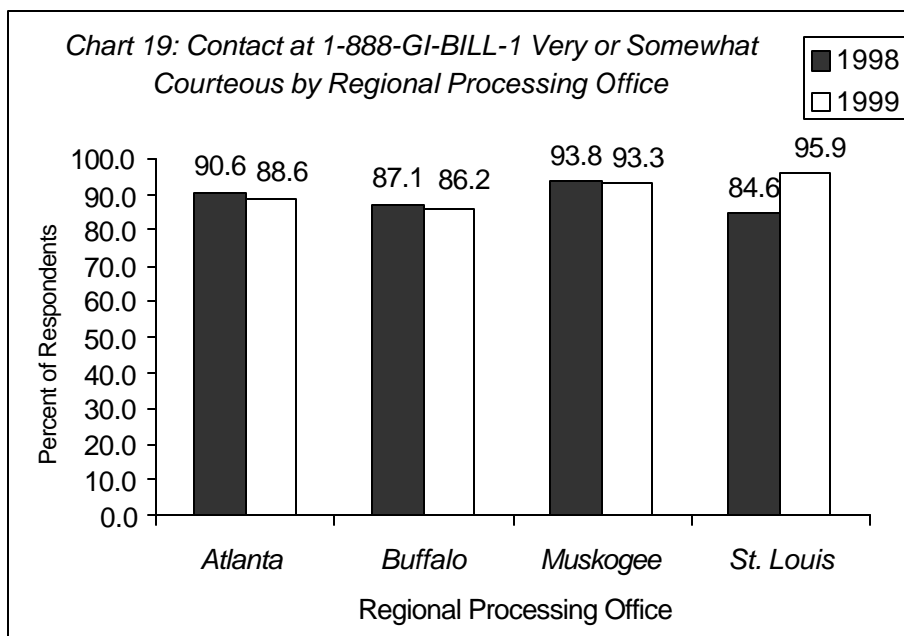


- The percentage of respondents served by the St. Louis RPO who received the information they needed on the first call to 1-888-GI-BILL-1 in 1999 (83.3 percent) significantly exceeded the percentages of each of the other three RPOs.

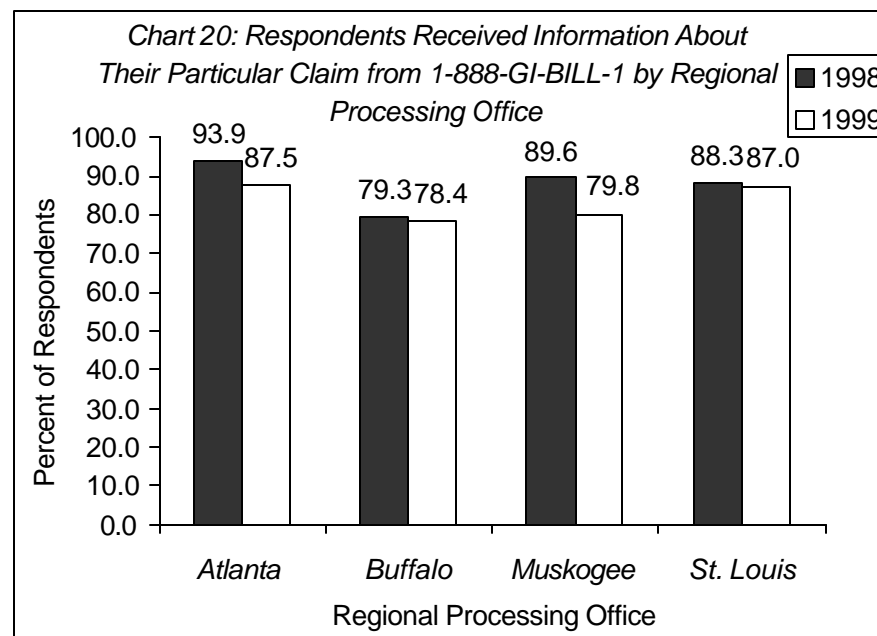


- Muskogee (94.3 percent) and St. Louis (96.0 percent) had the highest percentages of respondents reporting that the phone contact at 1-888-GI-BILL-1 in 1999 was very or somewhat responsive; they were significantly higher than the percentage in Buffalo (83.5 percent) and St. Louis's percentage was significantly higher than Atlanta's (90.6 percent).

Significant Differences Between RPOs, 1999



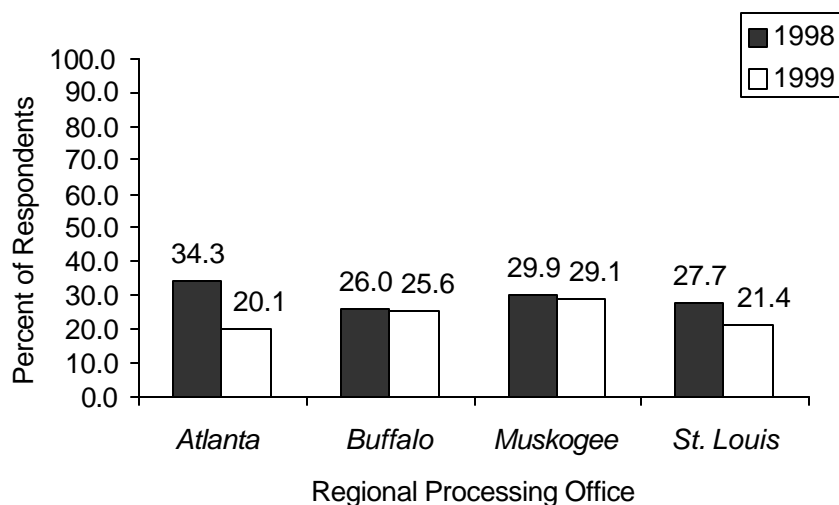
- The percentage of respondents in St. Louis reporting that the contact at 1-888-GI-BILL-1 was very or somewhat courteous in 1999 (95.9 percent) was significantly higher than the percentages of Buffalo (86.2 percent) or Atlanta (88.6 percent).



- A significantly higher percentage of respondents in Atlanta (87.5 percent) than in Buffalo (78.4 percent) or Muskogee (79.8 percent) received information about their particular claim from the contact at 1-888-GI-BILL-1.

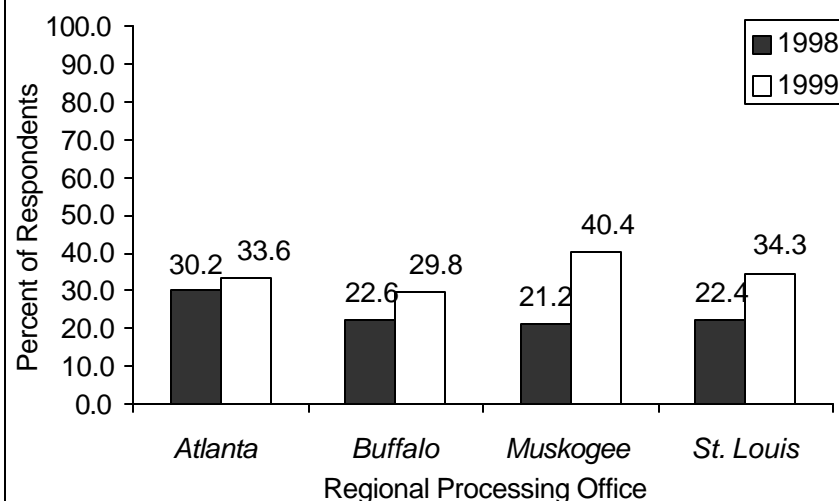
Significant Differences Between RPOs, 1999

Chart 21: Respondents Who Had Difficulty with Monthly Certification Process by Regional Processing Office



- The Muskogee RPO had the highest percentage of respondents who had difficulty with the monthly certification process in 1999 (29.1 percent), which was significantly higher than the percentages in Atlanta (20.1 percent) or St. Louis (21.4 percent). The percentage in Buffalo (25.6 percent) was also significantly higher than the percentage in Atlanta, which went from the highest percentage having difficulty in 1998 to the lowest in 1999.

Chart 22: Respondents Who Have Ever Received an Inaccurate Payment by Regional Processing Office



- The Muskogee RPO also had the highest percentage of respondents who had ever received an inaccurate payment in 1999 (40.4 percent), which was significantly higher than the percentages in each of the other three RPOs.